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Institutional Imperatives for South Asian Environmental NGOs

T. R. Ramanathan

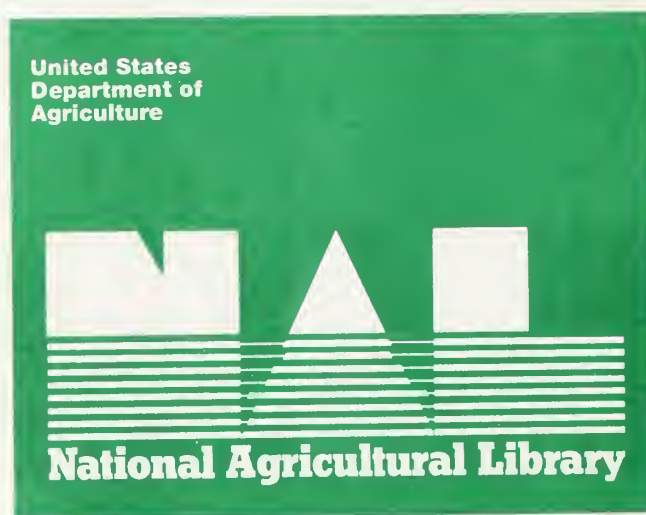
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INSTITUTIONAL IMPERATIVES FOR SOUTH ASIAN ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs



T.R. Ramanathan



Forestry Support Program



United States
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Preface

This report concerns strengthening institutional capacities of indigenous non-governmental organizations (INGOs) engaged in forestry and natural resource management endeavors in South Asia. The research was prompted by the USDA Forest Service, Office of International Forestry and USAID, Bureau for Research and Development, so as to help guide these agencies in further collaborative efforts that involve INGOs. The project was broken into three phases. An issues paper formed phase one; the second phase was a peer review of the issues paper; the third phase was compilation of this report that incorporates comments obtained through the review. Such a structure sought to fully tap the insights of persons and organizations involved in institutional strengthening efforts.

INGOs operating in the rural areas of South Asia play a vital role in progressing towards sustainability in environment and economic development. Despite prodigious amounts of money available for such development efforts, many INGOs simply lack the technical and organizational capacities to successfully absorb these funds and implement activities at the grassroots level.

In that light, the first part of this report describes major technical, organizational and policy constraints that affect the strengthening of these organizations at field levels, and presents issues for consideration. The second part features two main problem areas that were an outgrowth of the peer review discussions. They are: a lack of a favorable policy environment for enhancing the overall contributions of INGOs to national development, and the absence of adequate institutional arrangements at field levels for different groups to collaborate in technology transfer and in linking research and extension systems. These problems are identified with examples that outline the activities of three major categories of national and local organizations in forestry and natural resource management.

The third part deals with recommendations that emphasize the need for a practical framework for strengthening INGO capacities, and presents possibilities and opportunities for organizations, such as the USDA Forest Service and USAID. For example, they may help devise and implement development strategies through which voluntary action at different levels could be integrated to promote environmentally sound development at the grassroots level. Finally, this report is intended to serve as a source document for those organizations interested in working with environmental groups in South Asia. In this regard, additional references and a list of key South Asian INGOs in forestry and natural resource management are provided.

T.R. Ramanathan
Forestry Support Program

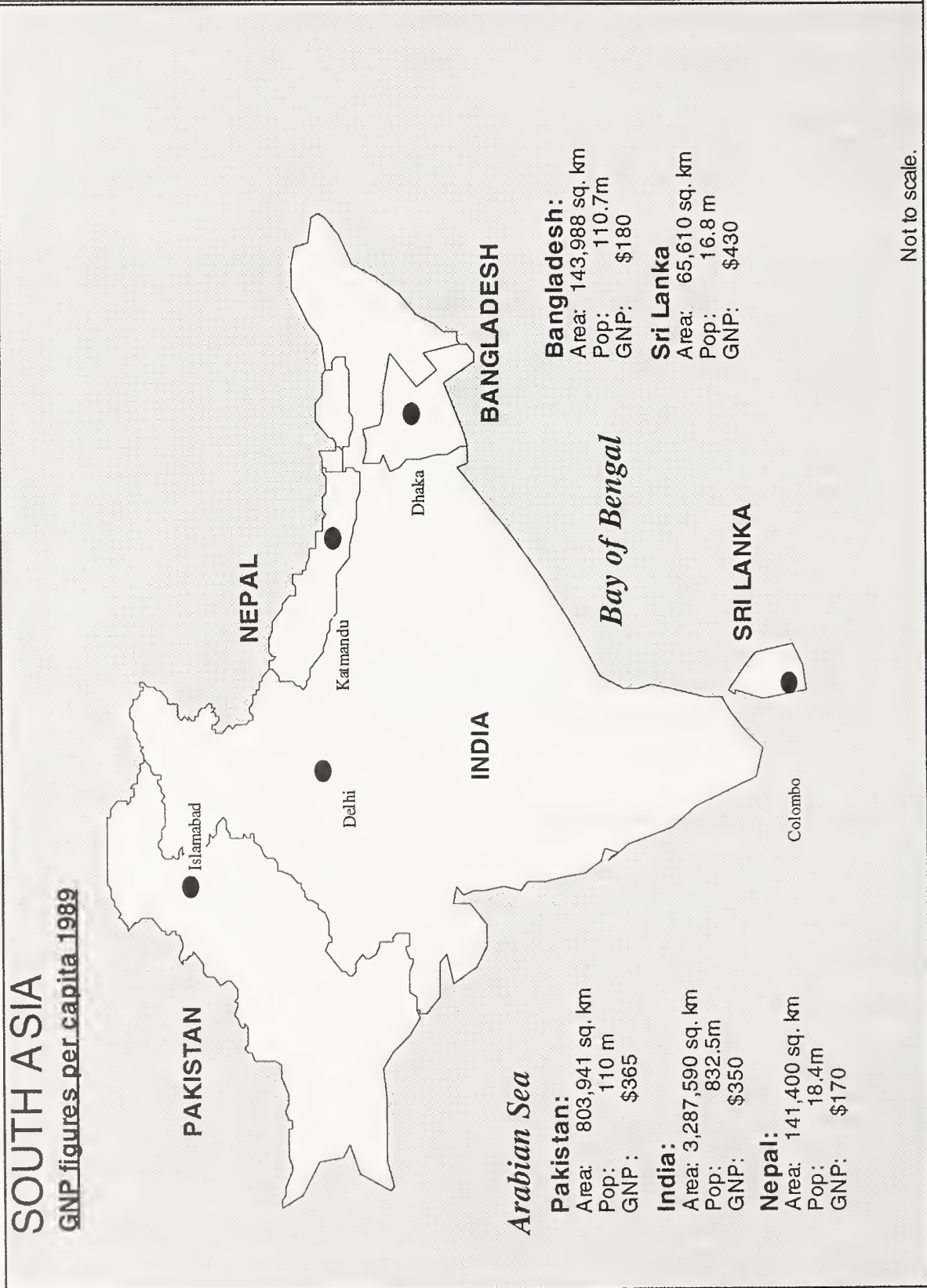
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It is also important to thank my informants at several international organizations for taking the time off their busy schedules to review and comment on the first part of this report.

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Summary

Strides towards regreening villages as part of overall development efforts are gaining prominence for South Asian indigenous non-governmental organizations (INGOs). In spite of the increasingly salient role of INGOs in influencing national development, there are several technical, organizational, and policy factors constraining their effectiveness.

This report draws on experiences from South Asia that portray some practical constraints associated with institutional strengthening of INGOs involved in forestry and natural resource management at the grassroots level. These include: inadequate long-term support for INGO activities which limits their organizational development and strategic programming abilities; governmental policies toward voluntary action which tend to be custodial in nature; and inadequate collaboration among different groups, including INGOs, which inhibits dissemination of knowledge and experience and transfer of technologies and skills.

Through a practical course of action, these constraints are then thought of as possibilities for change. This is especially true for development policies that should include suitable strategies to promote a workable framework for strengthening the role of INGOs in grassroots development.

Further, this report highlights the need for a unified model for strengthening INGO capacities.

Selected conclusions include:

- Institutional strengthening efforts must be based on open discussions, mutual trust, and sharing of responsibilities and resources;
- Partnerships among like-minded organizations are necessary;
- Organizations, such as the USDA Forest Service could assume a facilitator's role that may not only strengthen INGO-government relationships, but encourage positive policy changes;
- Institutional linkages between INGOs and other organizations could be strengthened through interdisciplinary research and collaborative activities, for example, joint training programs and internship opportunities; and
- Public sector companies could be instrumental in supporting INGO initiatives, particularly in increasing their entrepreneurial abilities, while also enhancing the corporate sector's social commitment.



PART I: ISSUES PAPER

Introduction

This report relates specifically to the process of institutional strengthening¹ among indigenous non-governmental organizations² (INGOs) in forestry and natural resource management, particularly in South Asia.³ The intent is to help guide the USDA Forest Service, Office of International Forestry and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in their activities with South Asian INGOs.

It was structured and written for the USDA Forest Service's International Forestry Staff. However, most INGOs are not only involved in forestry and natural resource management endeavors, but these programs are also integrated into the overall framework of environment and development. Thus, though this issues paper may "stray" far from the direct relationship of forestry and natural resource management, the tie is necessarily there. Issues are taken on a broader concept, as they are necessary for INGOs to be effective in forestry and natural resource management work.

There is no attempt in this exercise to address every issue confronting institutional strengthening of INGOs in South Asia, but it highlights certain important technical, organizational, and policy-oriented aspects taken from an empirical perspective. In a broader sense, the report provides an overview of policy factors constraining the practical strengthening of INGOs at the grassroots level, and outlines the need for appropriate arrangements so as to increase INGOs' impact and contribution to the development process.

Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations in Context

In the village of Valayarpatti,⁴ situated in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, a visitor would experience close encounters with misery and poverty. The brooks have dried up, foodstuffs have long since been consumed. Agriculture has failed because of prolonged droughts, and

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the village inhabitants have lost their means of livelihood. The most common source of income is from the sale of firewood, felled illegally from the nearby hilly, forest region. One day's work in the forest and two days on foot to the nearest city market yields approximately five to six Indian Rupees (approximately US \$0.20), an amount which barely is enough to buy three pounds of the inferior quality rice. To survive, rodents and snakes are hunted and eaten; to supplement rice, sometimes grain reserves hidden in termite hills are dug out, cooked and consumed.

A diverse spectrum of voluntary organizations are actively engaged in redressing these problems of hunger and environmental degradation. These organizations include quasi-governmental bodies, national and state federations of voluntary agencies, professional rural development organizations, advocacy groups, academic and research institutions, and cooperatives. They organize and empower community groups and emphasize use of indigenous resources at all levels of everyday life in the village context.⁵ Although these organizations differ from one another in terms of size, operational focus and institutional capacities,⁶ they exist for common reasons of alleviating poverty, advancing human development, and promoting effective management of natural resources.⁷

At one level, voluntary efforts are growing and gaining significance in influencing national development. At another, there is an increasing concern among northern NGOs, international donor agencies, South Asian governments and even INGOs themselves that the institutional capacities of INGOs need to be strengthened if they are to become effective development agents. Campbell explains:

A major effort is required to promote the importance of institutional development [strengthening] among governments, donors and [I]NGOs, to explain the basic concepts and strategies and, finally, to train people in carrying out institutional development [strengthening] interventions.⁸

INGOs: Strengths and Weaknesses

This growing concern among the development community at large has also led to a recognition that INGOs have certain comparative advantages over most public hierarchies, for example, in the tasks of reaching, informing, educating, and mobilizing the poor in inaccessible areas.⁹

As organizations driven by social values, such as self-reliance and self-governance, INGOs can identify themselves with the interests of the poor, and their high degree of commitment makes them well suited for initiating grassroots action. For example, the Baramati Agriculture Development Trust (BADT) mobilized a few hundred villagers to construct a hundred small dams in the drought-prone Baramati district of Gujarat state in India, which resulted in an increase in water availability.¹⁰ Wignaraja writes:

Through a process of awareness creation, initiators [INGOs] mobilize people into self-reliant action and assist in the building up of collective strength.¹¹

INGOs, with their knowledge of the cultural and socioeconomic conditions of the local population, coupled with a great deal of organizational flexibility and highly motivated staff, are more effective than governments in promoting social changes at the grassroots level. In many cases, INGOs can visualize the interdependence between the different sectors, such as forestry, agriculture and health, and suitably integrate them into their program agenda. An example is the Sarvodaya Women's Movement in Sri Lanka whose holistic approach to rural development integrates agroforestry, homestead plantations, primary health care, agricultural processing, and rural communication.

The potential and practical benefits of involving INGOs in environmental work is receiving attention in the literature. For example Guggenheim and Spears note that, "Many of the most useful insights about small farm agroforestry have come from innovative research and projects carried out by [I]NGOs and self-help associations."¹² At advocacy levels, "[I]NGOs are able to demand public accountability, effective popular participation in the process of decision making at all levels, and

a recognition of the legitimacy of dissent.”¹³ Chambers’ concept of “additionality” entailing the following elements, predicates the potential contribution of INGOs to the development process:

Additionality means making things better than they would have been, and allows for bad as well as good effects. Seeking high additionality entails four elements: identifying and matching needs and opportunities; assessing comparative advantage - seeing what one [I]NGO does best compared with others; learning and adapting through action; and having wider impacts. An [I]NGO can achieve wider impacts in many ways including expanding its operations; introducing or developing technologies which spread; developing and using approaches which are then adopted by other [I]NGOs and/or by government; influencing changes in government and donor policies and actions; and gaining and disseminating understanding about development.¹⁴

Though it is indisputable that some grassroots organizations have had a major local impact,¹⁵ the scale of INGO impact and effectiveness is often debated among donors and governments. Largely due to the ideological diversity and uniqueness in the organizational histories and styles of INGOs, it is difficult to establish standard parameters for measuring their development performance.

According to one school of thought,¹⁶ public recognition of INGO effectiveness in delivering services has contributed to a mushroom growth and wide dispersion of INGOs over the past decade, particularly in India and Bangladesh. For example, Franda correlates the spurt in Indian INGOs to the few years of the Janata Party’s decentralized rural development focus.¹⁷ Consequently, in trying to respond to a plethora of needs and funding opportunities, INGOs sometimes become good at nothing, except packaging proposals for donors.¹⁸ Further, competition for funds, professional jealousies, differences in operational traditions, and the inspiration to serve donors better are common maladies that restrict inter-INGO collaboration.

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Institutional Challenges and Constraints

INGOs engaged in addressing environmental concerns are faced with multiple challenges. At one level are technical challenges. As an example, in community forestry there is a need to procure quality seeds; select proper nursery sites; transport and plant seedlings; protect and manage the trees; and ensure equitable distribution of benefits through community-based arrangements. At organizational levels there are difficulties in conducting proper needs assessments, recruiting and training staff, maintaining trainers' skills through refresher training courses, establishing sound fund-raising strategies, mobilizing local in-kind contributions from economically disadvantaged communities, resolving conflicts within their organizational structure, maintaining their relationships with government departments and other voluntary resource organizations (VROs),¹⁹ complying with the administrative and programmatic requirements of donor agencies, and dealing with political pressures without losing their independence and integrity.

A study by Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), a New Delhi-based VRO, states that INGO effectiveness and the opportunities for their organizational development are hampered due to the fact that they are isolated in rural areas.²⁰ In Bangladesh, an investigation by Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT) adds that the vital resource connection between resource organizations and small voluntary groups in the country's vast remote areas is missing.²¹

Government-sponsored development programs and INGO initiated activities are currently operating in different spheres with little or no flexibility for coordination, often reinventing wheels and duplicating efforts. INGOs are reluctant to participate in government programs because of the suspicion that bureaucracies may have a hidden agenda (control), while positive bureaucratic changes conducive to INGO involvement which happen at higher levels only affect the most senior officials in the government.²² These institutional challenges are well noted:

A major challenge over coming decades is bureaucratic reorientation,²³ including a change from authoritarian to participatory

styles and a shift in responsiveness from orders from above to demands from below.²⁴

Official Limitations on Voluntary Efforts

For two-and-one-half decades, planners in South Asia addressed development crises with expert-dominated official action directed through long-run employment creation and short-run work programs, such as "Food for Work" and "Employment Guarantee" schemes.²⁵ These schemes concentrated mainly on the symptoms of poverty, and not on the deeper political and socioeconomic causes of the problems. In general, poverty alleviation programs channeled large quantities of development assistance to build rural infrastructure in the form of roads, irrigation and drainage systems, communications, electricity and market facilities, provided the people with short-term employment benefits, but failed to break the cycle of poverty.

By the 1970s, the negative consequences in pursuit of this conventional strategy caused a shift in thinking to include recipient participation, INGO involvement, and indigenous knowledge.²⁶ As a result, INGOs were seen as a feasible mechanism to combat poverty by providing low-cost and effective delivery of development services. But at the same time, governments and national leaders were also aware that INGOs were becoming competitors for the loyalties of people and for donor funding.²⁷ This concept of competing for loyalty extends deeply into the fabric of South Asian societies. It has also become the foundation of daily behavior of the central and state bureaucracies. Even today, government officials in South Asia, particularly at the village and district levels, perceive INGOs as a threat to their interests or as an outside agency usurping the government's responsibility.²⁸ Korten asserts:

Government officials are both jealous of their own authority and rightfully fearful that any relaxation of central control may give free rein to forces of anarchistic violence much in evidence in contemporary Asia.²⁹

On the one hand, governments are exercising enormous control over voluntarism through extensive registration and fund-clearance procedures for INGOs, and with rigid amendments in laws that govern foreign donor collaboration with INGOs.³⁰ The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) of India and the Foreign Donation Regulation Ordinance (FDRO) of Bangladesh are examples of such enactments. On the other hand, government-organized INGOs are representing efforts to displace the voluntary sector.³¹ A prime example is the absorption of People's Action for Development India (PADI) into the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), a wing of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Government of India; interestingly, CAPART claims itself to be quasi-non-governmental organization.³² In truth, CAPART is a parastatal organization undermining pluralism by controlling and channelling large sums of funds to INGOs from bilateral and Indian government agencies.

Such steps have substantially limited the participation of INGOs in overall development efforts, and signify, on the governments' part, a fallacious misperception of the fact that development could best be built on the democratic values of the people who the INGOs represent.

Macro Schemes and Indigenous Organizations

Emphasizing institutional strengthening of INGOs provides more than lip service to concepts, such as "power to people," "empowering local groups," or "enhancing popular participation." Much of these are today little more than empty cliches and slogans. Institutional strengthening reaffirms participatory and other ideas as central, but these ideas deserve more than lip service in proceeding towards sustainability in environment and economic development.

Despite recent changes in official development strategies to include local organizations as partners in an integrated development network that promotes participatory development,³³ many macro schemes have been unsuccessful. These are projects that essentially failed to

embody adequate institutional mechanisms to service and support ground-level organizations (INGOs, community organizations, etc.). Examples of past projects include World Bank and major bilateral agency supported social forestry projects in India and Nepal's Community Forestry Development Project (CFDP). Evaluations reveal that the physical act of planting trees through a technical process outpaced by far the investment in the institutional process.³⁴ Conversely, improving the institutional capacities of indigenous organizations revolves around strategies that synchronize technical and managerial aspects through consistent and coordinated measures.

Expanded Role for INGOs

Recognition of the importance of INGO institutional strengthening can now be witnessed in the inclusion of phrases, such as "enhancing institutional capacities," "improving local [I]NGO effectiveness," and "expanded role for [I]NGOs" in official aid-agency reports and documents. To illustrate, the Brundtland Commission's Report incites, "a successful transition to sustainable development will require substantial strengthening of their [INGO] capacities."³⁵

The World Bank's Operational Directive states that some [I]NGOs' inability to contribute to Bank-financed operations are constrained by their limited managerial and technical capacity. The Directive adds, "Even some professionally staffed [I]NGOs are poorly managed, have rudimentary accounting systems, and sometimes initiate infrastructure projects with inadequate technical analysis."³⁶

The Environment and Natural Resources Strategy document of the former Asia and Near East Bureau (ANE) of USAID (a 1991 restructuring changed the composition of regional bureaus) outlines that [US]AID and ANE can "Strengthen institutions in their ability to inventory and value their resources and to analyze, develop and modify policies that directly or indirectly affect forestry, and natural resources management and use; promote new and expanded roles for [I]NGOs and the private sector in the host countries..."³⁷ In addition, the 1991 [US] *AID Initiatives* highlights the

environmental framework to include three broad categories of approaches to be taken by the Agency. They are: strengthening human and institutional capacity and building public awareness; reforming unsustainable economic and environmental policies and practices; and encouraging private sector participation in promoting environmentally sound development activities.³⁸

At the national level, the Government of India has identified as vital components of social forestry projects to include education, training, research, and extension activities. These would help develop the technical and managerial skills of state government departments, [I]NGOs, and individual tree growers.³⁹

Examples of Institutional Strengthening Efforts

...improving the institutional capacities of indigenous organizations revolves around strategies that synchronize technical and managerial aspects through consistent and coordinated measures.

Over the past two decades, USAID, through its Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (PVC), has supported US-based private voluntary organizations (PVOs) in carrying out local institutional strengthening activities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. To give examples of PVOs that have facilitated strengthening of local capacities in grassroots community development in the Philippines and Indonesia, the World Vision Relief and Development Organization (WVRD) instituted Development Assistance Centers (DACs) in partnership with local entities, either through a local church or through WVRD's field office itself. Under this model, community leaders received short-term training in development aspects of agriculture and other technical areas, and returned to their respective communities to impart these skills to others.⁴⁰

The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRI), a PVO headquartered in the Philippines, has established a Field Education and Training Support Unit that helps community organizations develop their organizational management, leadership, group dynamics, project management, and finance and accounting skills.⁴¹ These efforts have made an impressive investment in upgrading the human resource potential by providing a broad range of training and technical assistance to INGOs including development of management

information systems, annual and medium term planning cycles, cost effectiveness, and performance tracking systems.⁴²

Another example is the Bankura project in the Indian state of West Bengal, jointly sponsored by the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Program for Rural Women and the Center for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) of New Delhi. Short-term management training courses for women's groups, offered in collaboration with VROs, have resulted in the active involvement of women in project management, and regeneration of community assets through enhanced technical skills.⁴³ However, the success of the Bankura effort has been constrained by excessive reliance on government departments for project supplies and marketing; this exposes vulnerability to changes in official climate.

The World Wildlife Fund-USA (WWF) has been offering training workshops for conservation INGOs in Asia and elsewhere through its Organizational Development Program (ODP). This program promotes organizational self-reliance through developing the overall organizational capability by integrating managerial, operational, programmatic, and financial components.⁴⁴

Since the early 1980's, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and USAID, under a joint initiative, have attempted to strengthen the technical division of Nepal's Social Service National Coordination Council (SSNCC), a quasi-governmental body responsible for INGO coordination and strengthening.⁴⁵ SSNCC has been helping Nepalese INGOs strengthen their program competence through training in social process methods, project formulation, management and evaluation, and adaptation of local resource technologies.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, the promoters had placed only marginal emphasis on documenting experiences, and in supporting an open dialogue among like-minded organizations for sharing insights, pooling resources where applicable and cooperating in training activities, to enable greater feedback and collective learning. Thus, many of the valuable lessons learned from these efforts have not been adequately documented.

More specific to forestry and natural resource management, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) requested the establishment of an [I]NGO coordinating body that serves as a focal point for information sharing among INGOs in environment and natural resources management.⁴⁷ The Agricultural Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), formerly a forum and a representative of [I]NGOs with government, has expanded its role to include training and technical assistance for INGOs. Similarly, the Sri Lanka NGO Council has begun training programs for its member groups.⁴⁸ The World Bank's effort in involving professional Indian [I]NGOs and resource organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of Bank-supported operations ranging from sericulture to watershed management is an apparent reflection of institutional strengthening concerns shown by a multilateral agency.⁴⁹

Financing Policies and Perspectives

Notwithstanding these laudable efforts, for the most part the rhetoric about INGO institutional strengthening has not been paralleled by practical efforts on the part of donors and governments. Korten points out that, by channelling large sums of money through central governments, donors have more often been forces for central control than for institutional pluralism.⁵⁰

An example of a slack on institutional strengthening is governments' and donors' short-term focus in supporting the activities of INGOs. Usually, donor and government financing policies emphasize physical targets and lengthy reporting procedures, thus offering limited opportunities to INGOs for the transfer of technical and managerial skills, and for exploring future resource options for continuing the benefits to the poor.

In addition, many donors understand institutional strengthening under the context of financial independency and attaining self-sufficiency over a short period of project or program assistance. Contrary to this understanding, it has been averred that, when INGOs entail even partial institutional development, they become more cost-effective

while benefits are sustained.⁵¹ Against this backdrop, it has been recommended that donor agencies should provide more long-term funding to support [I]NGO projects and institutional-building activities.⁵²

Issues for Consideration

Promoting institutional strengthening among INGOs involved in forestry and natural resource management will require significant rethinking on the part of northern NGOs, international donor agencies, and Asian governments. Integral to this rethinking are specific issues, as presented below:

- Currently, many donors and national governments offer inflexible project specific grants to INGOs which provide no scope for modifications within the existing project structure or for change in priorities as needs of the local population change;
- Lack of administrative funds restricts INGOs from hiring experienced and well trained staff for delivering the project services effectively;
- INGOs at the "grassroots" level do not have access to information concerning donors who provide partial, or comprehensive administrative support in the form of core funding;
- Absence of adequate professional training organizations that provide organizational development services. Even if there are any, they are either too far away or the INGO cannot afford the training costs for its personnel;
- Insufficient funds for professional training groups to carry out sizeable and long-term organizational development endeavors for INGOs;
- Poor networking among INGOs, VROs, and research and technical institutions inhibits dissemination of knowledge and experience, and transfer of new technologies and skills;
- High consultancy charges demanded by local and expatriate specialists for rendering professional services to INGOs;
- Inadequate seed grants for experimenting with new innovations or pilot projects;
- Insufficient fund-raising/marketing skills among INGOs prevents them from exploring local financial options rather than depending on external sources for long-term support; and
- INGOs are bogged down with mandatory administrative and reporting requirements for donors and governments, and thus have less time and opportunity to enhance their technical and organizational capabilities.

PART II: ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Introduction

In its three months of review phase, the introductory issues paper had two parallel objectives. One was to help spur a discussion among select organizations in the development community which focus on forestry and natural resource management in the South Asia region, the other was to generate ideas for recommending appropriate institutional arrangements. Much of the review discussions revolved around central issues, such as the need for a unified model for INGO institutional strengthening,⁵³ the imperative for more collaborative efforts among like-minded organizations,⁵⁴ and on how institutional strengthening could/should be addressed from a donor's perspective.⁵⁵

In considering promotion of institutional strengthening among South Asian INGOs, there are two main problem areas. The first concerns weakened opportunities for increasing the cumulative impact of INGO contributions to rural well-being because of governmental approaches and strategies (especially in forestry and natural resource management sectors), which appear to be more custodial than collaborative in nature.⁵⁶ It is therefore important to explore modalities through which the international donor community could influence national governments in creating a more favorable policy arena for reflecting INGOs' concerns and activities. A positive example in this direction is the World Bank's effort in Bangladesh that "strongly supported the reformulation of the Government's policy on [I]NGOs, particularly in the direction of

streamlining the administrative and legal framework within which they operate, so as to enhance [I]NGO contribution."⁵⁷

The second problem situation is determined by inadequate collaboration among three main national and local actors: national INGO umbrella/support groups; national forestry and agricultural research and technical institutions; and field-based INGOs. This impedes the proper linking of research and extension systems and encumbers extension of production and management technologies that are more appropriate to rural populations dependent on forests and other natural resources. Much of the present day technologies do not sufficiently stimulate the participation of villagers, both from economic and environmental standpoints. Moreover, the economic feasibility of tree growing by farmers are substantially influenced by marketing and policy distortions. For example in India, despite the acute fuelwood shortage, farmers receive only Rupees 250 (US \$10) per ton of fuelwood.⁵⁸ Unlike in agriculture, forestry research and extension lacks a spatial arrangement at field levels through which different groups could jointly interact with farmers in areas, such as seed technology, species selection, pest management, marketing and pricing, and land tenure.

Against this background, presented here are examples that: provide an overview of the organizational roles; highlight major operational and policy constraints; and illustrate collaborative opportunities for the aforesaid three actors in forestry and natural resource management work.

EXAMPLE A⁵⁹

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTION OF WASTELANDS DEVELOPMENT, INDIA

Introduction

The Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD), headquartered in New Delhi, is a national INGO apex body established in 1982 with a purpose to combat degradation of land-based resources through reclamation activities, such as crop husbandry, tree plantations and pasture development, in collaboration with local counterparts. SPWD's policy concerns in these areas are reflected through lobbying with appropriate government departments and agencies, both at national and state levels.

Most field activities are implemented in partnership with INGOs who share a common vision with SPWD. Specifically, these INGOs are assisted by SPWD in planning, formulating, and implementing technically and economically feasible demonstration projects in cooperation with local government agencies. In the late 1980's, SPWD's activities included assistance to twenty INGOs in forty-five districts spread in ten Indian states, with projects ranging from integrated land development to sericulture on common village lands (see Figure 1). SPWD's special emphasis is in strengthening community involvement for developing wastelands, which constitute thirty per cent of India's total land area (see Figure 2). Projects are designed based on locally perceived needs and capabilities, and ensure fairness in distribution of benefits through community-evolved arrangements.

These tasks are coordinated by a team of well-qualified and experienced SPWD staff that includes foresters, soil and water conservation experts, agronomists, sociologists, economists, management professionals, and rural development specialists, who play a crucial role in the various stages of a project cycle. With ten years of programming experience with INGOs, SPWD has come to realize that technical innovations in land-based activities increase productivity, and also elicit the participation of disadvantaged landless poor. The following examples are demonstration projects that illustrate approaches to management of private and community lands through enhanced community

participation, and are incremental learning models⁶⁰ in Indian INGO forestry innovations.

Strengthening Community Organizations in Nursery Development

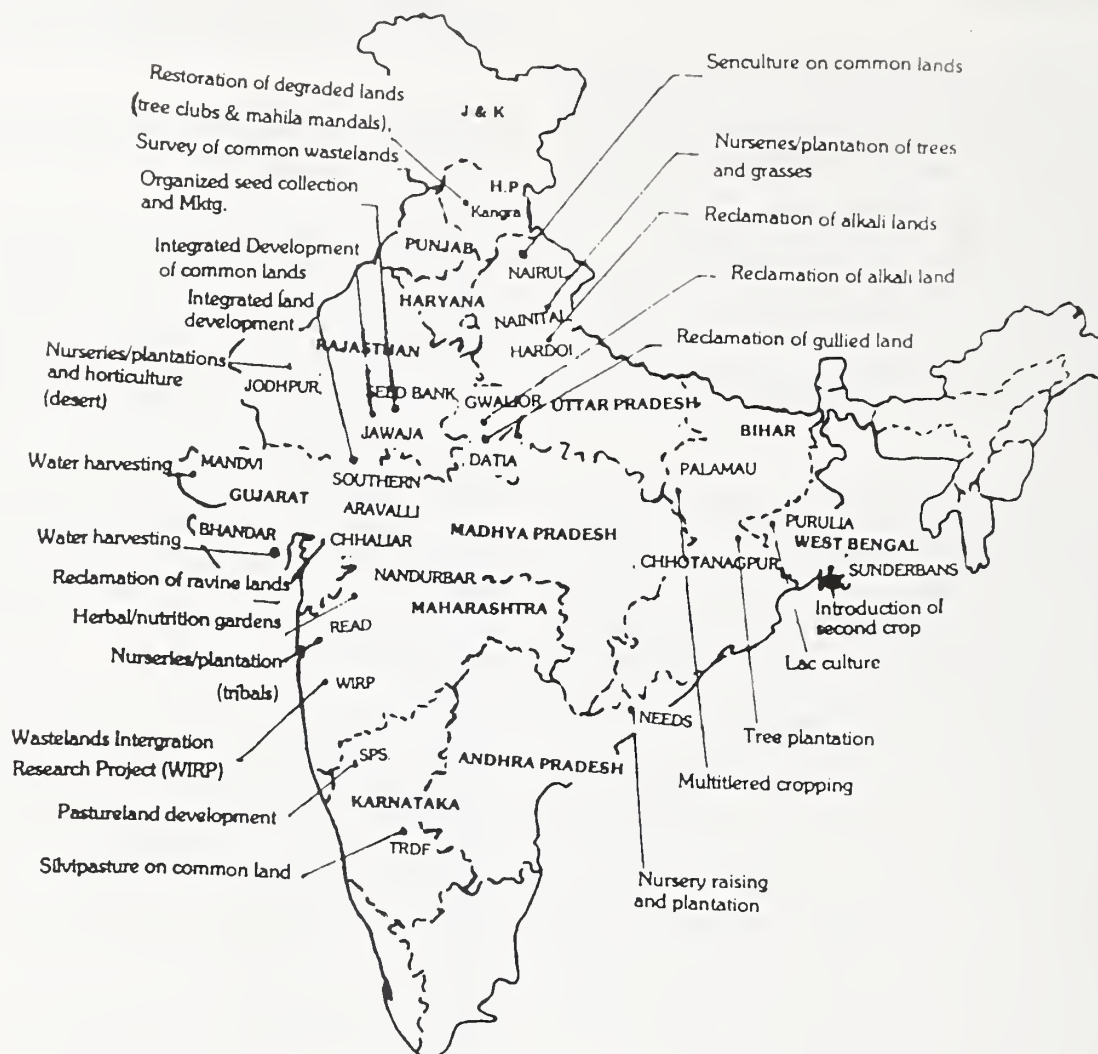
Beginning in 1987, SPWD assisted the Nature, Environment and Education Development Society (NEEDS) in Andhra Pradesh state in raising 360,000 *Casuarina* spp. tree seedlings and several fruit-bearing species with the involvement of sixty-one private farmers and twenty-one women from sixteen villages. Over the course of this project, forty-five farmers were trained in nursery-raising techniques, and the women were provided training assistance in developing home gardens to meet the nutritional requirements of local households. Trenches were dug in an effort to conserve soil and water at the project site.

A three-day workshop held for the participating village organizations activated discussions among the rural community to strategize the concepts of this initiative. Despite the efforts in initiating a dialogue among the project participants, SPWD doubted whether or not the long-term environmental benefits of this activity were clear in the participants' minds. The major focus here, however, appears to have been in upgrading the technical and organizing abilities of the participating INGOs, and in developing the leadership capabilities of the village organizations involved, particularly for determining issues of labor, seedling distribution, plantation care, and equitable distribution of benefits. The essence of this effort could be realized in terms of NEEDS' increased ability to impart training in nursery raising to other INGOs and community groups in the area.

Integrated Land Development Through Forestry

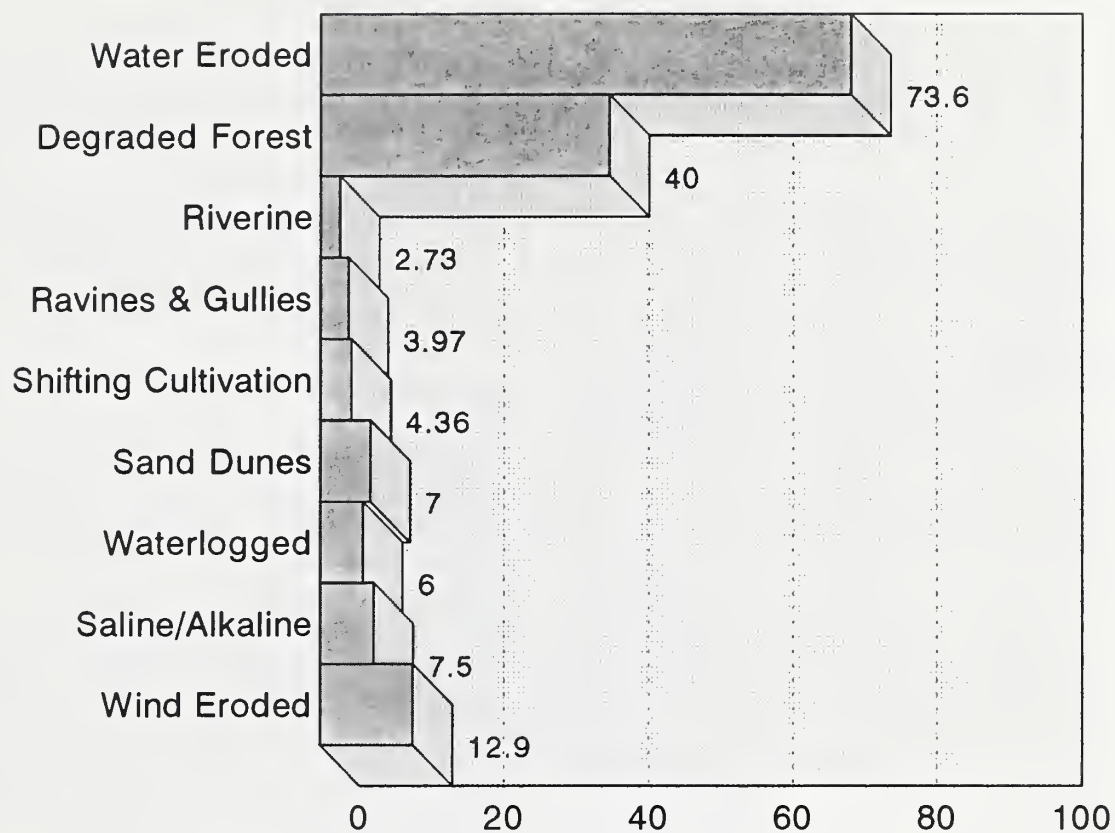
The Wastelands Integration Project (WIRP) in Maharashtra state was a collaborative experiment that had SPWD's active participation. The initial years of this experiment

Figure 1. SPWD's 1990 Activity Profile



Source: 8 Years of SPWD, 1990, SPWD, New Delhi.

Figure 2. Wastelands in India (million hectares)



Source: Wastelands: Challenges and Response, 1987, World Wildlife Fund-India, New Delhi.

generated valuable information essential for assessing the project feasibility, and for matching the needs of INGOs and the target population. Tree species, such as *Dalbergia sissoo*, *Acacia auriculiformis*, and *Leucaena leucocephala* in combination with agricultural crops, were planted at different locations with an objective to enhance food security through increased yields. Research on use of compost manure with earthworms to increase soil infiltration, pest management, and on-field water harvesting formed integral components of this experimental initiative. Local farmers' knowledge paved the way for finding practical solutions to field level problems, and for on-site learning for local INGOs.

Collaboration with local agricultural universities and individual experts further helped to compare and contrast this research with those that are university-based, and educated local extension agencies in these areas so that they could devise future extension strategies in the light of these research findings. Furthermore, SPWD initiated the establishment of a network of forty INGOs to disseminate the lessons learned through this innovative experiment. Close interactions with these INGOs also revealed that SPWD could play a positive role in documenting and publishing the lessons learned on various aspects of watershed development, grassroots mobilizing and organization building, and in educating a wide audience involved in similar efforts in other states.

The Gwalior Experiment in Land Reclamation

Since 1987, the Gwalior project in Madhya Pradesh state has attempted to reclaim saline and waterlogged lands through a pilot project in partnership with the Gwalior-based Rabbani School. The project commenced with SPWD's initiation of a hydrological and geological investigation to determine a suitable land use plan that combined agricultural crops with horticultural and fuelwood plantations. Separately, an experimental plot helped monitor the cost-benefit ratio of crop cultivation in affected lands with chemical soil amendments. Salt-tolerant grass species were introduced over a small area to measure the effect and impact of

grasses as land reclamation agents. Different plots were maintained in the Rabbani School farm to compare yields of paddy and wheat under conditions of pyrite and gypsum application along with green manure. Considerable improvement in soil productivity and better yields were obtained during the successive years of this pilot initiative.

"Farmers' Day" events helped gather a large number of farmers, agricultural specialists, and local government officials in the project area to share insights and experiences. This experiment also accelerated the interests of farmers in nearby villages to discuss similar approaches to reclamation of saline and waterlogged lands through forestry-related activities.

Broader Issues

In addition to conducting local events and networking with INGOs, SPWD has created other communication channels to disseminate technical and managerial solutions to field problems encountered by grassroots organizations willing to undertake innovations in effective land management through forestry and forestry-related activities. The "Wasteland News" and the "Parti Bhoomi Samachar" are newsletters that convey SPWD's experiences and insights to a readership of about 3600 people across the country. In addition, SPWD coordinates reviews and evaluations of its activities and of other organizations to highlight lessons that could lay foundations for similar efforts in other parts of India. SPWD's participation in regional and national seminars and workshops have reaffirmed its full belief in a community-based learning process approach to environmental degradation.

During the last decade, SPWD has made strategic advances in assisting grassroots organizations develop their institutional capacities for improving the quality and effectiveness of their programs, and in establishing support systems necessary not only for information sharing at different levels, but also for providing professional growth for both SPWD and INGO staff members. More importantly, SPWD's initiatives have promulgated lessons in areas of local leadership versus entrenched interests, professionalizing the

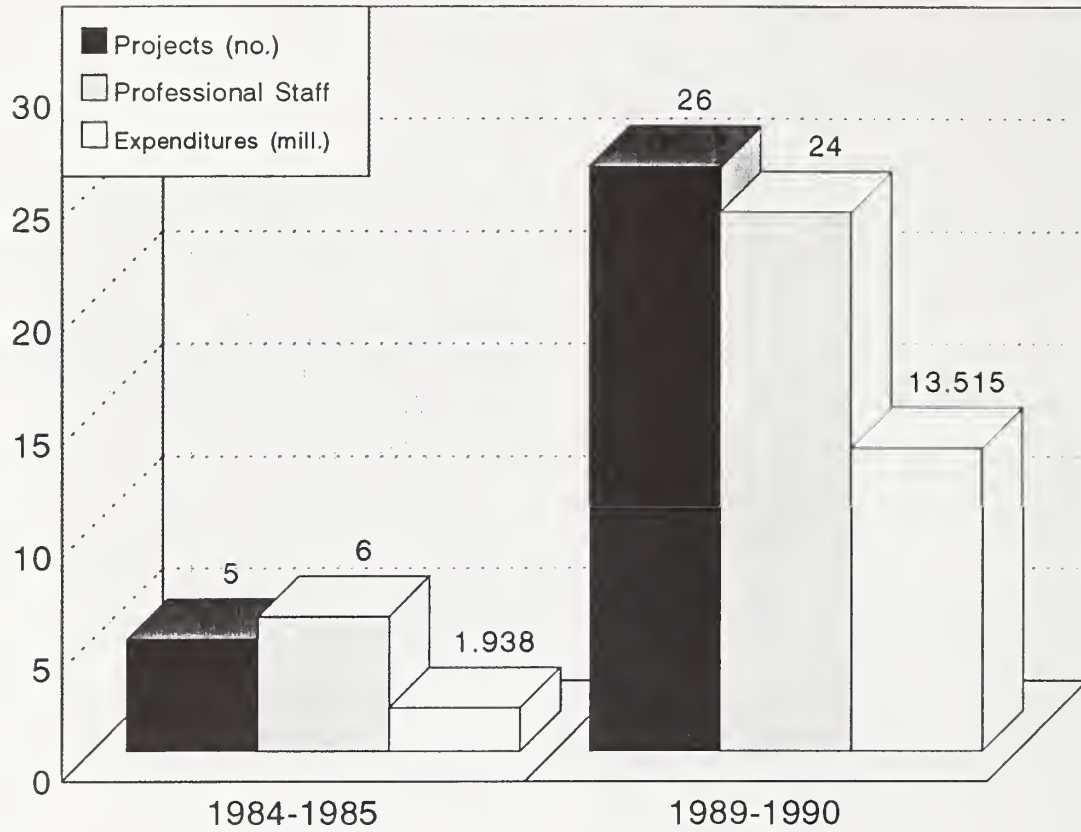
planning and implementation of programs by village organizations, conflict resolution, and operationalizing the concept of equity. The cornerstone of SPWD's development practice appears in its pivotal role in facilitating coordination between local government agencies and INGOs, which could be attributed to the high level official representation in its management processes. However, the important question remains whether INGOs can continue to mobilize technical support from local government agencies after SPWD's withdrawal.

The economics of SPWD from 1985 to 1990 indicate an almost five-fold increase in budget, staff and program operations (see Figure 3). These large strides towards increasing services to INGOs have been supported by the Ford Foundation, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and a host of Indian government agencies. This rapid organizational expansion indicates SPWD's vulnerability to transforming into another big bureaucracy, which may lead INGOs to mistrust its intentions.⁶¹

Apart from assisting INGOs and community groups in remote areas, SPWD can also consider long-term strategies, such as strengthening state-level INGO umbrella groups who in turn can assist smaller INGOs and community organizations, and prioritizing its program and advocacy focus to critical problems in the forestry sector. These strategies, in conjunction with its diversified sources of funding and endowment generation, will ensure wider impact and sustenance of its mission.

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Figure 3. Organizational Growth of SPWD (1985-1990)



Source: 8 Years of SPWD, 1990, SPWD, New Delhi.

EXAMPLE B⁶²

BANGLADESH AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, BANGLADESH

Introduction

The Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), located in Dhaka, is a hierarchical national research organization established in 1973 under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture of Bangladesh. Since inception, BARC has remained the focal point of the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) which constitutes technical institutions, research bodies, agricultural universities, and specialized government agencies (see Figure 4). BARC's mission features the coordination and promotion of agricultural research activities among its member institutions and of other government departments and agencies, with an objective to increase productivity in food and fibre crops, livestock, fisheries and forests.

As the central agency responsible for agricultural research activities, BARC's organizational strategies are focused on identifying problems in the broader agricultural sector encompassing forestry, crops, soil, water, crop protection, agricultural engineering, livestock, fisheries economics and social science, and devising appropriate plans and programs (short and long term) that fit the elements of national policy on agriculture. BARC's major concerns in strengthening national capabilities are evidenced in its planning and integration of resources for agricultural research and development.

Priorities in forestry include: agroforestry and fuel needs with emphasis on multiple use and sustained productivity of forested land; soil and water management; collection, evaluation and conservation of major indigenous species; pest surveillance and integrated insect and disease control technology; farming systems studies focusing on integration of soil, water, crop, tree, animal and fish components to optimize resource use; post-harvest technology for small farmers; improvement of simple equipment and farming lands; socioeconomic studies that include marketing, price policy and credits; small-scale rural industries development including processing enterprises; manpower training and transfer of improved technology;

and impact assessment of improved technology by linking research and extension systems.

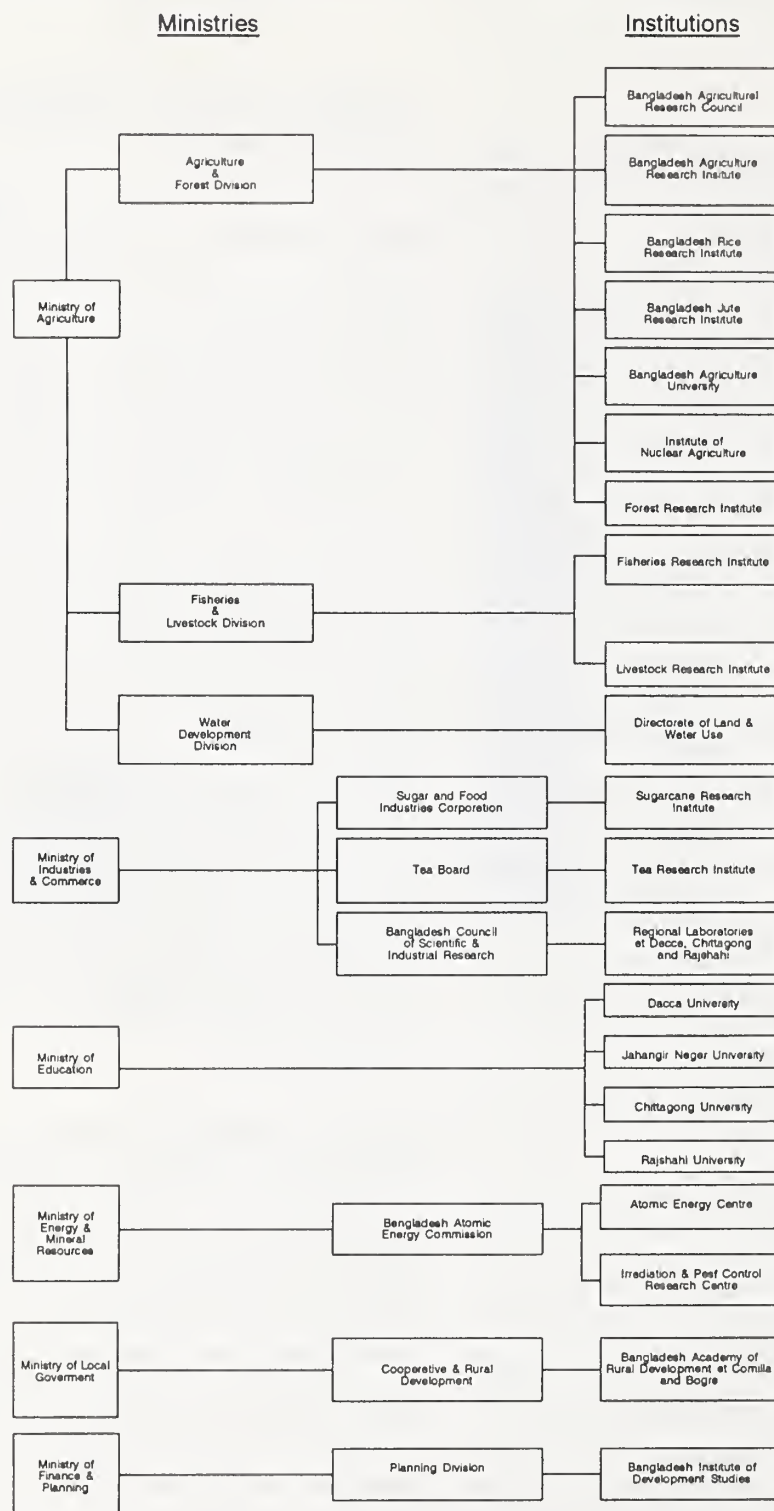
Support Services to Member Institutions

BARC's services to its constituents include processing and approval of applications for funds for research projects. Such approvals are based on fulfillment of established criteria for funding, such as relevance of proposed projects to BARC's mission, and the technical competence of the applicant agency.

Technical evaluation of BARC-funded projects, monitoring BARC-supported research programs through periodic reviews, and appraisal of projects and sub-projects to assess achievements and constraints, further form part of BARC's activity framework. In addition, BARC plays a significant role in estimating the training needs of scientists and professional staff within the NARS, and coordinates in-country and overseas training activities. On a regular basis, BARC evaluates the research facilities in NARS to upgrade these facilities and, in many instances, establishes or facilitates the establishment of research institutes, experiment stations, documentation centers, and other relevant structures as needs dictate.

Research findings of projects supported or coordinated by BARC are disseminated to a wide range of organizations within NARS and to international organizations involved in agricultural research. In an advisory capacity, BARC advises the Bangladesh Government on utilization of foreign funds for agricultural research, and liaises Bangladesh's representation in international conferences and seminars. BARC also maintains professional relationships with bilateral and multilateral organizations, and networks with international technical and research organizations. Since establishment, BARC has been instrumental in drawing support from the World Bank and USAID for agricultural programs in Bangladesh.

Figure 4. Institutions in National Agricultural Research System of Bangladesh



Source: J. Davidson. 1984. Assistance to the Forestry Sector of Bangladesh: Research in the Forest Management Branch of the Bangladesh Forest Research Institute. UN FAO Field Document No. 4(1).

Management Structure and Other Services

BARC's activities are managed (see Figure 5) by a Governing Council composed of the heads of its member organizations, who also frame BARC's policies. The Executive Committee assists and advises the council in conducting daily operations of BARC. The Technical Committee processes project applications, and arranges reviews and evaluations of BARC-funded research programs. The Technical Committee is further decentralized by specialized areas to include forestry, agricultural engineering, horticultural crops, soils and irrigation, industrial and field crops, livestock, agricultural economics and social sciences, and nutrition and home sciences.

The Finance Committee helps with the planning and management of BARC's annual budget. Additionally, the Program Planning and Review Board (PPRB), consisting of renowned national scientists, key professionals from government agencies and research and technical institutions, helps review research activities and establish new priorities for allocation of resources. PPRB further assigns specific responsibilities to the participating research institutions with an aim to increase productivity and to avoid duplication. The Chairman of BARC assumes overall responsibility for administration and program implementation, with the assistance of Member-Directors in technical areas and the Secretary in administrative and financial matters.

The National Agricultural Library and Documentation Center (NALDOC), with the support of BARC, serves as a clearing house of information on technical and scientific issues in agriculture. NALDOC collects, processes, and disseminates information through journals, monographs, bulletins, and reports that are published periodically by the publications unit. NALDOC is also the national center for Agricultural Research Information Service (AGRIS) which contributes to increasing the awareness on current agricultural problems, and for retrospective search. Important publications of NALDOC include, for example, the Directory of Agricultural Scientists of Bangladesh, inventory of past and present research projects, and Bangladesh Agricultural Abstracts.

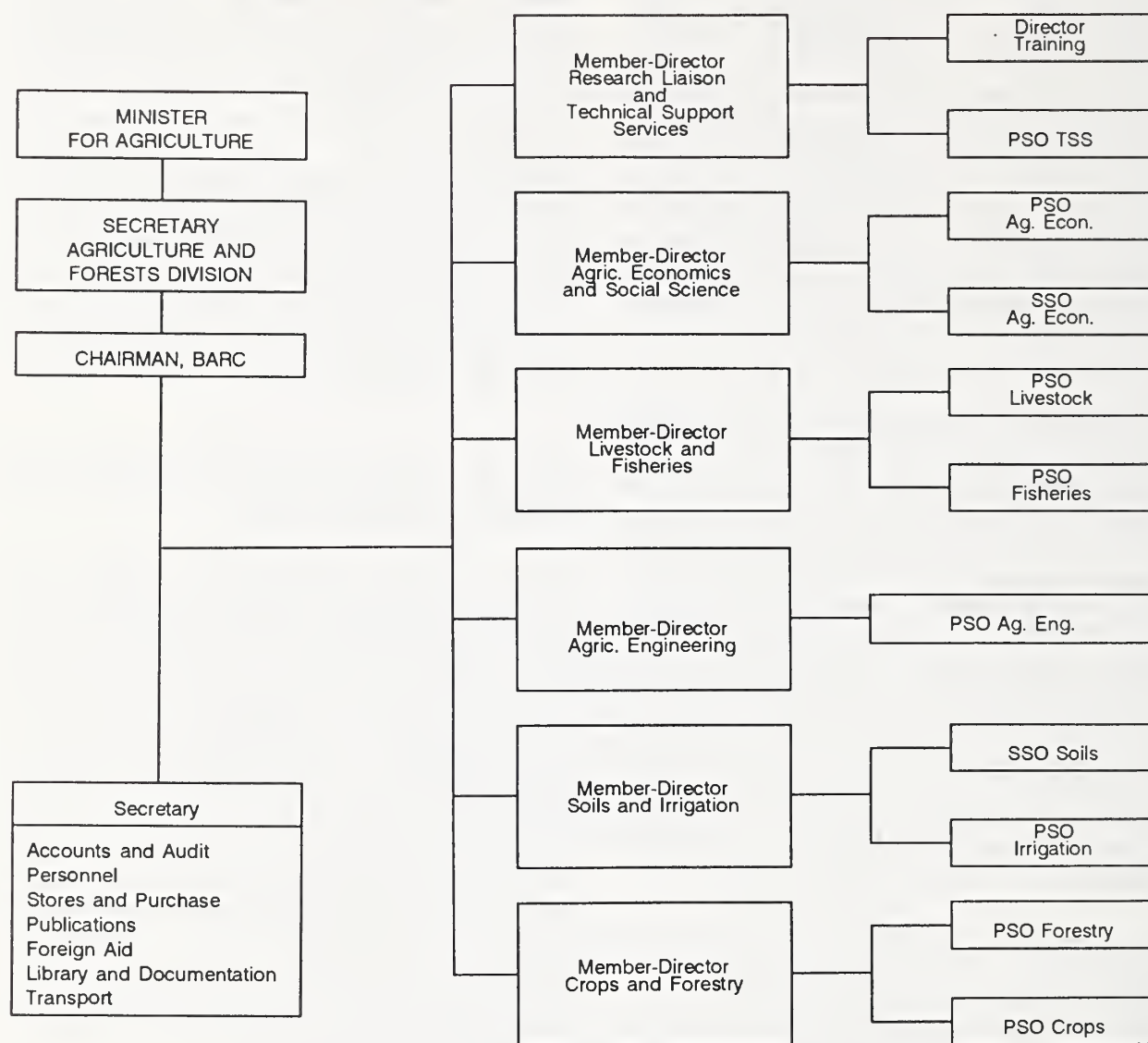
The International Project Support Unit (IPSU) of BARC provides logistical support to expatriate agricultural consultants and BARC staff, such as financial management support to BARC's contract research and technical assistance projects supported by international donors, and coordination of the participation of local scientists in international events. To give an example, IPSU's role can be witnessed in channelling support from USAID for the establishment and strengthening of the Forestry Research Institute (FRI) in Chittagong. With recent funding from the Asian Development Bank, UNDP, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN/FAO), FRI has now embarked upon major planning activities under the framework of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP).⁶³

Need for Linking Forestry Research and Extension through INGOs

While national agricultural centers in Bangladesh have made significant investments in conducting research oriented toward increasing yields through diffusion of modern rice and wheat varieties, research on resource management issues and the environment has been neglected.⁶⁴ More importantly, forestry research appears to be isolated from a unified management system for forest resources, and not properly linked with extension systems,⁶⁵ despite global forestry research priorities urging more strategic forestry research in relation to agriculture and rural development. Moreover, agricultural diversification has not adequately engendered the integration of tree, crop, water, soil, and livestock components through on-farm research and development.

Most often, forestry research and development practices fail to adequately incorporate human needs into their design,⁶⁶ as is the case of Bangladesh Government's response to deforestation through its social forestry program. Under this scheme, large-scale enrichment plantations on Bangladesh's degraded Sal forest zone and agroforestry plantations on vacant forest lands were undertaken with an objective to improve land use practices and increase production of bio-mass fuel and utility timber through the involvement of landless poor and

Figure 5. Organizational Chart of BARC



PSO = Principal Scientific Officer
SSO = Senior Scientific Officer

Source: J. Davidson. 1984. Assistance to the Forestry Sector of Bangladesh: Research in the Forest Management Branch of the Bangladesh Forest Research Institute. UN FAO Field Document No. 4(1).

marginal farmers. Unfortunately, the selection of exotic species, such as *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and *Acacia auriculiformis*, did not adequately produce the qualitative and quantitative range of benefits in comparison to indigenous species like Sal (*Shorea robusta*). Sal leaves are a valuable source of fuel in winter and their fuelwood could be sold in local markets, hence providing attractive incentives to the village communities involved.⁶⁷

Thus, there is a demonstrated need for augmenting more adaptive research⁶⁸ that tailors forest technology to the requirements of local population, and institutions like BARC, along with the INGO community in Bangladesh, can play a vital role in strengthening and linking forestry research and extension systems.

Most often, forestry research and development practices fail to adequately incorporate human needs into their design...



EXAMPLE C

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING, SOUTH INDIA

Introduction

The Center for Community Development and Training (CCDT) is an INGO that was founded as an experiment in Madras in 1987 by a group of young development professionals. CCDT's foremost concerns are with the practical side of development and with the participatory process that emphasizes individual and collective responsibility, fulfilling basic needs through means available, and wise use and management of natural resources through socially suitable procedures.

Approaches to Community Development

With a staff of four, the Center commenced its operations in four villages at the tail end of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The reasons for choosing this area were prolonged drought conditions and a high incidence of poverty. As in other drought-prone areas of India, the economic and social well-being of the population living in this semi-arid region (receiving 600 mm or less rainfall per annum) seems to revolve around the success of agriculture, with few alternatives for income generation. Most families depend on the farms either as subsistence farmers or as agricultural laborers. Further, these families are able to find work only for four or five months (during monsoons) every year, after which time male members of the family migrate to nearby urban centers in search of wage employment. Desperate male exodus has substantially contributed to a decline in agricultural production and has greatly increased the female labor burden and labor constraints in farms.

With these desolate conditions in mind, CCDT's first step was to help the village communities prepare problem strategies into an objective framework. This was done by organizing the village youth, leaders, and other key individuals into groups and sub-groups. Through a series of meetings and discussions held informally or under the auspices of the village groups, and using group communication methods, the community's knowledge on immediate problems

were updated. The whole approach was non-directive in nature and was designed to seek the responses of villagers to various problem situations by improving their awareness of these situations. The next step was to convert the voiced needs and perceptions of the communities into meaningful action programs. Through extensive dialoguing and education, CCDT hoped to pass on appropriate technical and managerial skills as lasting benefits to the communities, so that in a progressive manner they would be able to assume further responsibilities, and at a definite juncture self-reliant units can be envisaged.

The communication of simple skills to the villagers was perhaps even more challenging than helping them prepare problem strategies. This was because the communication of such skills in a society with a lot of traditions and taboos was often difficult. CCDT's efforts would have run counter to most long-held traditions and beliefs which form the web of the cultural milieu of the Indian society. Therefore, innovation had to be called for in communication as a strategy. By involving the communities in the various stages of a project, CCDT not only hoped to pass on long-lasting benefits to the disadvantaged groups, but also hoped to channel the results back into mainstream development to disseminate the valuable lessons learned.

Development Through Forestry

Months of extensive dialoguing with village communities resulted in the evolution of a plan that aimed at:

- Facilitating the transformation of part-time small and marginal farmers into full-time agriculturalists by combining crop and tree components, thus enhancing food and income security;
- Providing the landless poor with skills in forestry techniques for increasing their potential for participating in government social forestry programs and, at the same

time, providing short-term employment benefits;

- Establishing tree plantations in private farm lands either exclusively or in combination with agricultural crops, in order to meet the local fuelwood, fodder and small timber requirements;
- Promoting soil and water conservation through appropriate forestry practices; and
- Strengthening local institutional capacities in these areas.

These goals were translated into a proposal in 1988 for funding from the National Wastelands Development Board (NWDB), Government of India, to assist a total of 158 small and marginal farmers, and landless laborers. After a year's worth of follow-up correspondence, NWDB requested the Tamil Nadu State Forest Department (TNSFD) to inspect the project area and provide its recommendations for processing the application further. Shortly after NWDB's request, TNSFD assigned one of its Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) to inspect the project area and provide a report to NWDB. Such an inspection included visits to the proposed nursery and plantation sites, and brief discussions with potential participants for ensuring their willingness to plant trees in their farm lands.

The communication of simple skills to the villagers was perhaps even more challenging than helping them prepare problem strategies.

Having been convinced with the scope for forestry work in these villages, the DCF recommended approval of the first phase of the proposed project, which was the establishment of a nursery with 100,000 seedlings. TNSFD made attempts to influence the selection of species with an intention to promote fast-growing exotic varieties that would primarily suit industrial purposes, particularly those industries engaged in processing wood pulp and manufacturing cardboard. However, in discussing this problem with the villagers and other experienced INGOs, it became clear that a combination of exotic and indigenous species would provide a variety of short and long-term benefits to the farmers, and at the same time positively contribute to the growing deforestation problem. The selection of species

included *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Albizia lebbek*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Dalbergia sissoo*, *Leucaena leucocephala*, *Prosopis juliflora*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Sesbania grandiflora*, and *Tamarindus indica*.

Participation in Nursery Development

The most central village was chosen to establish the nursery. This was due to the ease in transport of seedlings to other villages, availability of water, and protection facilities. Seeds of indigenous tree varieties were collected from within the area while exotic tree seeds had to be procured from a seed farm maintained by an INGO named Palani Hills Conservation Center (PHCC). Farmers expressed skepticism in approaching the local forest department for seeds (for quality reasons) or for technical support. The main reason for this was their fear that the local forest department may eventually try to gain control over their tree plantations.

Nursery seed beds were constructed using split palmyrah barks and other locally available supplies. To CCDT staff's surprise, local farmers were well informed of phytosanitary practices,⁶⁹ and carried out seed treatment that included hot and cold water treatments, chemical treatments, and removal of infected seeds. To the extent possible, indigenous materials and knowledge were fully tapped in establishing the nursery. Maintenance and protection of the nursery rested with the village groups and sub-groups with assistance from CCDT staff. Due to high evapotranspiration, initially the seedlings had to be watered on a daily basis. Economically disadvantaged women from two villages were engaged for this purpose. Nursery protection included a live hedge around the nursery and guarding by group members on a rotational basis.

Throughout this process, the villagers showed keen participation by regularly attending group meetings, offering suggestions for improvement, helping procure project supplies, taking active part in transplanting young seedlings from seed beds to plastic bags, and taking individual

Farmers expressed skepticism in approaching the local forest department for seeds (for quality reasons) or for technical support.

responsibility for managing the daily chores of the nursery.

Constraints in Maintenance

Even though the initial nursery phase was successful in terms of achieving the target of 100,000 seedlings and in generating community participation, failure of monsoon rains constrained the continued maintenance of the nursery until additional funds were received. Requests for additional maintenance funds from NWDB, explaining the situation, were in vain because of delays in bureaucratic processing and approval (NWDB policies require an official inspection for every phase of a project). In the meantime, the seedlings had started rooting deep into the soil, which meant more labor for constant root trimming and changing the location of plastic bags at regular intervals of time. A high rate of casualty occurred during this process. Sole dependence on NWDB funds and the inability to provide collateral security for a short-term loan from banks shut down possibilities for any form of stop-gap arrangement for continuing the activities.

In addition to these operational constraints, the well-to-do farmers of these villages began to express jealousy about the fact that CCDT was employing landless people at better wages, thus breaking a centuries-old system of social injustice. An unwillingness to compromise their shares in the spoils of power, coupled with the problems in the nursery, inspired these power holders desiring to extend their power bases⁷⁰ through writing petitions to government authorities to discredit CCDT's initiative.

Under such circumstances, the project participants began to lose confidence in this effort and express serious doubts in taking up plantation work.

Outcomes of the Initiative

The CCDT staff, with their sense of commitment and perseverance, continued dialoguing with the communities in an effort to restore their confidence and enthusiasm. Additional seedlings were grown to make up for the casualties in the nursery, and two CCDT staff members made extended field visits to similar INGO projects in the neighboring districts to bring in new insights and advice. The plantation phase commenced with delayed assistance from NWDB, but only achieved a forty-percent survival rate during the initial year. NWDB, without any room for discussion, discontinued assistance to CCDT. However, under the National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC), CCDT has continued to disseminate its experiences in forestry to other INGOs in the area.

Besides the accomplishments in community participation and decision-making in forestry activities, inadequate technical planning on CCDT's part, such as in using meteorological forecasts, or in approaching technical organizations for accurate inputs concerning the agroclimatic conditions of the area limited the success of this initiative. Owing to its inexperience, CCDT could have initiated this project on a smaller and manageable scale to assess problems and weaknesses, and prospects for expansion.

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Women take active part in nursery establishment.



Multi-purpose tree seedlings raised in seed beds and plastic bags.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications for INGO Institutional Strengthening

An essential requirement, if the institutional capacities of INGOs are to be strengthened, is a change in attitude on the part of government functionaries, especially among district and village level officials. One major impediment to community participation in forestry programs is mid-level government officials' unwillingness to relinquish authority to local people and their institutions. "Government officers explain this caution as growing from fears that local population would destroy the resource once government controls were lessened."⁷¹ Experiences from community forestry development efforts in Nepal have demonstrated that community participation could be enhanced by reorienting Department of Forests' field staff through strategies such as participatory workshops, field support, and long-term institutional changes within the Department of Forests.⁷²

Institutional strengthening must be based on open discussions, mutual trust, and sharing of responsibilities and resources. The Ford Foundation's effort in helping forest departments work with INGOs and research institutions for identifying ways of enhancing local participation in joint forest management programs in India⁷³ is a fine example of the underlying synergistic potentials.

Strengthening INGOs also calls for partnerships among like-minded organizations. By initiating a continuing dialogue between planners, resource groups and INGOs, donors could assume a facilitator's role that will not only strengthen INGO-government relationship, but encourage policy changes that could serve as incentives by improving coordination among local government officials, resource groups and INGOs. An example of this sort of dialogue was the workshop "Community Forestry, [I]NGOs and Policy: What Makes for Success,"⁷⁴ held in Bangkok and jointly sponsored by the UN/FAO, Thailand's Local Development Institute (LDI), and the World

Institutional strengthening must be based on open discussions, mutual trust, and sharing of responsibilities and resources.

Resources Institute (WRI), with partial funding provided by the USDA Forest Service's Tropical Forestry Program (TFP). This program brought together sixty representatives of INGOs, Asian governments, and international donors to discuss a wide range of approaches which contribute to success of INGO action in community forestry.

There is an imperative to strengthen the present institutional linkages (see Figure 6) between INGOs and other organizations in the development community. This could largely be done by increasing support to interdisciplinary research and collaborative activities carried out by [I]NGO cells and units within different donor and government agencies, and increasing the involvement of INGO umbrella bodies in these endeavors. Furthermore, this would facilitate the establishment of a two-way communication for both systems to comprehend each other, and lead to a better understanding of INGOs' training, organizational and technical needs, on the part of donors and governments. Current activities of [I]NGO cells and units could be expanded to include experimental projects in partnership with INGOs, forums and debates with INGO umbrella groups to discuss policy issues, practical research projects that disseminate lessons learned from other regions of the world, and internship opportunities for INGO staff at these cells/units and vice versa. More of such INGO cells are encouraged to be formed at state and provincial level government agencies and departments, which could serve as coordinating points for INGO activities in remote areas.

Donors and governments should provide long-term and flexible support to INGO initiatives to develop their information systems that will permit documentation of outcomes and sharing of acquired knowledge on a wider basis. Flexibility in funding would also enable INGOs to articulate long-range goals, foster a more viable climate for strategic programming, and provide opportunities for exploring local financial options, thus also causing a shift in many INGOs' short-term vision for organizational sustenance. Further, INGOs' operating efficiency at field levels could be improved by providing realistic administrative funds for long-term projects, either in the form of core funding or solely as a package for institutional development that matches a specific project.

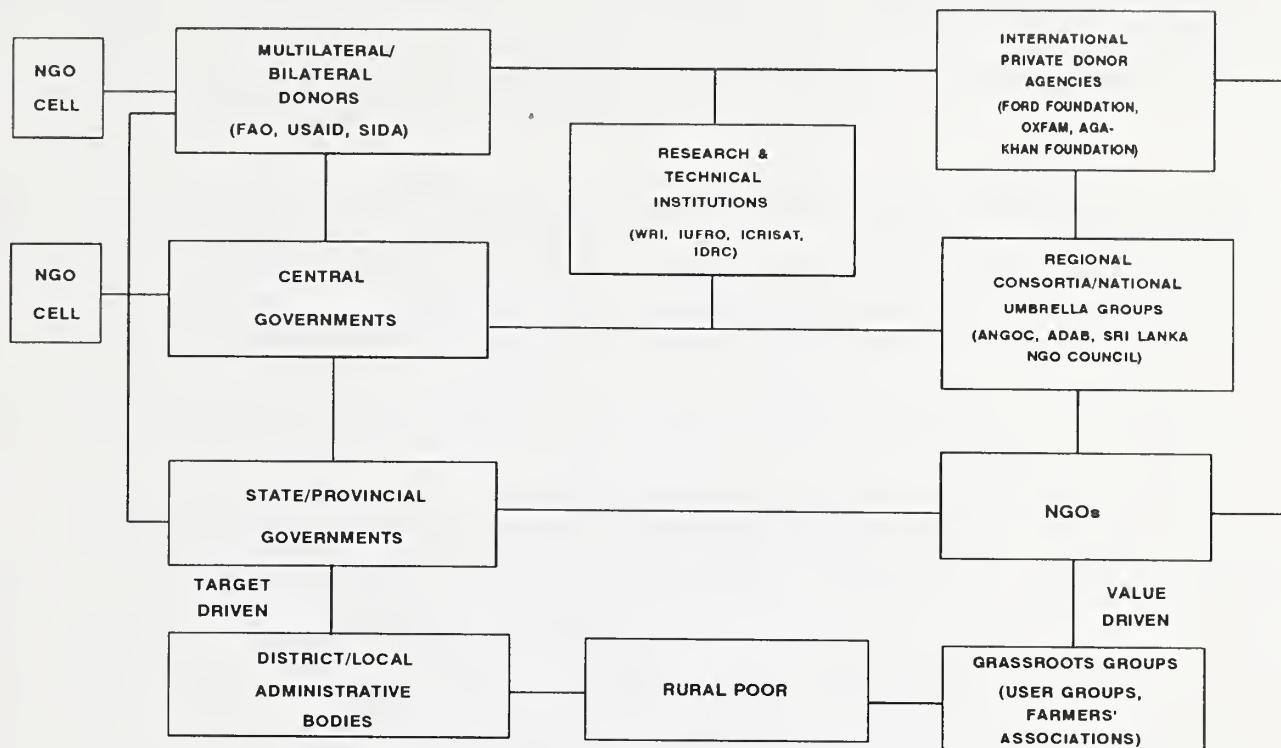
Inadequate administrative funds, in many cases, dampens growth in organizational infrastructure, and in management areas. Seed grants should be provided for new innovations by INGOs, especially those which have a collaborative potential. In sum, a reassessment of current donor and government financing policies, and more simplified reporting and administrative procedures are inevitable for strengthening INGO capacities.

In the context of improving INGOs' entrepreneurial abilities for generating funds from local sources, public sector companies could be instrumental in supporting INGO initiatives. For example, the Madras Refineries Limited (MRL) and the Madras Fertilizers Limited (MFL) in India have contracted the Madras-based Swallows in India to carry out sizeable afforestation work in their vast company-owned lands, and have also actively supported tree-planting campaigns in urban areas. These large companies, with legislative approbation could earmark a small percentage of their profits to development programs through INGOs. In return, the companies could use such programs as a tool to publicize the corporate sector's social commitment.

Government-organized research and technical institutions are important elements that could train INGO staff in technical and managerial areas. With the support of national governments, these institutions should tailor subsidized training programs suited for INGOs. Such an arrangement would have advantages in the following areas:

- Training INGO staff at governmental institutions alongside governmental field staff would pave the way for improving the adversarial relationship, and contribute to forging new linkages;
- Effectively link governmental research and extension systems with rural communities, while INGO staff act as catalysts in the process;
- Largely solve the problem of INGOs' inability to provide high consultancy charges demanded by local and expatriate specialists; and

Figure 6. Institutional Linkages in International Development



- Address the issue of insufficient numbers of private professional training institutions.

The Matching Grants Program (MGP) of USAID's PVC enables US-based PVOs to take up field-oriented activities designed to be implemented in a number of countries. Matching grants provide USAID funds for up to fifty percent of program costs and are awarded to PVOs registered with USAID.⁷⁵ Additionally, the Outreach Grant Program (OGP) allows unregistered PVOs obtain assistance, particularly with a potential for matching grant

support.⁷⁶ These programs, in conjunction with similar efforts promoted by other national and international partners, are necessitous for instilling new ideas and inputs for evolving strategies and practices appropriate to expanding the role of INGOs in national development.

Lastly, issues of environment and development would only gain in significance as we proceed into the next century. The synergy of INGOs, resource groups, donors and governments could do much more for the poor than any of these alone.

NOTES

1. The term "institutional strengthening" is used broadly here to include organizational development interventions and development strategies that assign rights to resources, define roles, and govern individual and collective action (Christopher Gibbs and Jeff Romm. 1982. "Institutional Aspects of Forestry Development in Asia." Paper presented at the **Workshop on Forestry Development in Asia**. (New Delhi: U.S. Agency for International Development), pp. 1-2).
2. This document restricts its definition of non-governmental organizations to "Private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development" (The World Bank. 1988. Operational Manual Statement: Collaboration with Nongovernmental Organizations. No. 5.30. (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank), p. 1). Particular reference is made here to NGOs with field projects since they constitute the largest number of NGOs, and are thus termed indigenous NGOs or INGOs.
3. For the purposes of this report, South Asia will encompass Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
4. During 1987-88, the author was involved in an integrated rural development project implemented in this village by a Madras-based INGO, the Indian Cultural Development Center.
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15. Norman Uphoff, (ed.). 1983. **Rural Development and Local Organizations in Asia.** (New Delhi: Macmillan).
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22. Mark Poffenberger, (ed.). 1990. **Keepers of the Forest: Land Management Alternatives in Southeast Asia.** (Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press), p. 107.
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KEY INDIGENOUS NGOS

The following list of indigenous NGOs is compiled based on the information obtained from various NGO directories . The list provides a combination of NGO types, such as development-oriented NGOs with field programs, apex organizations that coordinate NGO efforts at national levels, organizations that provide service support like training and technical assistance, and networking groups. For further information on the activities of an individual NGO, please contact a coordinating agency included in the respective country section.

BANGLADESH

Society for Project Implementation, Research, Evaluation & Training
8/3 Segun Bagicha
Ramna, Dhaka 2

Association for Social Advancement (ASA)
Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD)
Bangladesh Rural Action Committee (BRAC)
Bonds for Voluntary Services (BVS)
Community Development Services (CDS)
Friends in Village Development, Bangladesh (FIVDB)
Gono Shasthya Kendra (GK/GSK)
Gono Unnayan Procheta
Rural Development Training Institute (RDTI)
Samaj Unnayan Proshikkhan Kendra (SUPK)
Village Development Centre (VDC)
Voluntary Organization for the Needy (VON)

INDIA

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)
F-6 Kailash Colony
New Delhi 110048

Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD)
Shriram Barathiya Kala Kendra Building
1 Copernicus Marg
New Delhi 110001

National Wastelands Development Board (NWDB)
Ministry of Environment and Forests
7th Floor, Paryavaran Bhavan
CGO Complex, Lodi Road
New Delhi 110003

Action for Food Production (AFPRO)
Agricultural Institute
Anand Niketan Ashram
Arthik Samta Mandal
Auroville Centre
Bal Niketan Sangh
BAM India

Banwasi Seva Ashram
Berinag Gram Swarajya Sangh
Bastar Society for Conservation of Nature
Bharathiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF)
Bhagvatulla Charitable Trust (BCT)
Chetna Mandal
Consortium on Rural Technology (CORT)
Daliyon Ka Dagya (DKD)
Dasholi Gram Swaraj Mandal (DGSM)
Doodhatoli Parikshetra Vikas Samiti
Doonghati Shikshan Sansthan
Gandhi Peace Foundation
Gram Gaurava Pratistan
Himalaya Seva Sangh
Indian Institute for Social Development & Research
Jakshwar Shikshan Sanstan
Kashtkari Sangathana
Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust
Krishi Aujar Sudhar Samiti
Lakshmi Ashram
Lok Chetna Manch
Lok Jivan Vikas Barati
Maharogi Seva Samiti
Mahatma Gandhi Vidyalaya
Millions of Trees Club
Mitti Bachao Abhiyan
Nagaland Gandhi Ashram
National Institute of Rural Integrated Development (NIRID)
Parvitiya Yuva Morcha
Ranchi Consortium for Community Forestry
Seva Mandir
Sucheta Kripalini Shikshan Niketan
Togar's Cooperative Sales Society

NEPAL

Department of Forestry and Plant Reseach - Headquarters
P.O. Box 2270
Thapathali
Kathmandu

Integrated Development Systems P. LTD. (IDS)
P.O. Box 2254
Kathmandu

LEADERS INC. (P) LTD.
P.O. Box 2986
Kathmandu

Annapurna Conservation Area Project
Bhimeswori Yuba Club
Dhulikhel Youth Club
Jan Sewa Samiti
Karnali - Bheri Integrated Rural Development Project (K - BIRD)

King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
Kosi Hills Area Rural Development Project (KHARDEP)
Kulekhani Watershed Soil Conservation Project
Lalitya Yuba Club
Mother's Club
Naxal Youth Club
Nepal Centre for Integrated Research
Nepal Family Planning Association
Nepal JAYCEES
Pakhribas Agricultural Centre
Rhino Club
Rural Technology Development and Extension Service
Sailungeshwori Development Association
Samaj Sudhar Club
Sanatan Dharma Sewa Committee
Shree Bajra Barahi Society Development
Shree Narayangarh Youth Club
Sunapati Youth Club
Suryamuki Shanthi Youth Club
Synergy INC.
Tribeni Youth Club
Women Development Association

PAKISTAN

Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
P.O. Box 506
Babar Road
Gilgit

Rural Development Foundation of Pakistan (RDFFP)
RDF Centre (I&T)
Mauve Area
G-9/1, P.O. Box 1170
Islamabad

Agricultural Welfare Association
Christian Welfare Society
Lyarri Community Development Project
Mustafabad Welfare Society
Pakistan United Youth League
Pakistan Youth Club
Potohar Village Development Association
R.B. Welfare and Education Foundation
Rural Community Development Project, Batkhela
Social Welfare Association

SRI LANKA

Environmental Foundation Ltd.
29 Siripa Road
Colombo 5

NGO Liaison Unit
Ministry of Plan Implementation
Government of Sri Lanka
Colombo

Sarvodaya Women's Movement
32 Rawatawatte Road
Moratuwa

Central Council of Social Services (CCSS)
Centre for Development Cooperation (CFDC)
Coordinating Secretariat for Plantation Areas (CSPA)
Gami Seva Sewvana
National NGO Council of Sri Lanka (NGO Council)
NGO Water Supply and Sanitation Decade Service
PIDA
Sri Lanka Women's Conference (SLWC)
The Central Council of Social Services
The Lanka Mahila Samity



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